

GiveBack's 20th Annual Food Distribution. Their efforts provide over 1,500 families in the National Capital Area with wholesome Thanksgiving dinners.

Ransom Miller III founded Project GiveBack in 1995. In its first year, six local families and one shelter received food baskets. Over the next two decades, this small effort grew to serve 3,500 families in locations across the country, including Washington, D.C.; Dallas, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Tulsa, Oklahoma; St. Louis, Missouri; and Denver, Colorado.

Project GiveBack's scope has also grown to include: Children's Toy Drive, to provide toys for children in low-income families; Children's Easter Celebration, to provide a safe and fun atmosphere for children in Southeast D.C. to celebrate the spiritual meaning of Easter; Computer Sponsor Program, to assist local schools and community organizations in the acquisition of more than 100 laptops and personal computers; and Youth EXPOSURE Program, to connect students of various backgrounds and to expose them to a wide range of experiences that will spark career aspirations, ingenuity, and creativity.

Project GiveBack is achieving its mission to be a vehicle for firms and professionals to give back to the communities where they work and live in by coordinating programs that benefit less fortunate individuals and families, with a focus on children. It is the intent of the organization to uplift communities around the United States mentally, spiritually, and economically.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in commending Project GiveBack's volunteers and sponsors and may they soon join the more than 650,000 residents in our nation's capital in thanksgiving for full representation for D.C. in Congress.

WELCOMING ENSLIE COLE DECK

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, as I rise today, it is my pleasure to announce the birth of Enslie Cole Deck on November 19, 2014 at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital in Fairfax, Virginia.

Enslie is the daughter of Wiley Deck, my Chief of Staff, and Elizabeth Deck. The former Elizabeth Buckles and Wiley Deck met as staff members in our Washington office. Both of them moved to our Florida District Office in St. Augustine in 2003. They married and had their first child, Emilia Hayward Deck. The Decks returned to Washington, DC in 2011 and now have expanded their family with the arrival of Enslie.

To the Deck and Buckles families, we extend our warmest congratulations and wish them years for continued health and happiness.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF
FALEOMAVAEGA'S PROVISION
FOR NON-SAMOAN VETERANS
MARRIED TO SAMOANS TO
QUALIFY FOR VA HOME LOANS

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to include, for historical purposes, information about a provision for non-Samoan veterans married to Samoans to qualify for VA home loans.

[Press Release, Nov. 10, 2005]

HOUSE PASSES VA HOUSING ASSISTANCE BILL AND INCLUDES FALEOMAVAEGA'S PROVISION FOR AMERICAN SAMOAS VETERANS AND THEIR SPOUSES

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that by a voice vote the House passed H.R. 3665, the Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act of 2005 and included Faleomavaega's provision for American Samoan veterans.

I especially want to thank Chairman Steve Buyer and Ranking Member Lane Evans of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and also Chairman John Boozman and Ranking Member Stephanie Herseth of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity for their leadership in making it possible for Native Americans to participate in the veterans housing loan program, Congressman Faleomavaega said.

I am especially thankful that American Samoan veterans have also been able to participate in this very successful program and I thank my colleagues for working with me to address the concerns of American Samoans without adversely affecting the rights of other tribes. Many Samoans have served in the military and they are allowed to obtain home loans under current law. Other Samoans are married to non-Samoan veterans Non-native military spouses married to native Samoans have not been able to qualify for the VA home loan program. In part, this is because the Native American Home Loan program excludes the spouses of non-native Americans from qualifying for a VA home loan.

This has been problematic in American Samoa because most land in American Samoa is communal and the VA has only made it possible for Samoans of Tutuila, Manus, Aunu'u, or Swain Islands to qualify for home loans offered by traditional lending institutions because only they can make claim to native land. As a result, non-native spouses of veterans or persons serving in the US Armed Forces who are married to a Samoan have not been able to qualify for a VA home loan. However, the VA has been helpful in assisting the Veterans Affairs Committee and my office in drafting language to rectify this problem and I am pleased that this language has now been included in HR 3665.

As we have agreed, it is our understanding that this language now makes it possible for a non-Samoan military member or veteran to qualify for a VA loan if the non-Samoan military member has a meaningful interest in the housing a Samoan spouse has been granted permission to build on communal land. It is also our understanding that meaningful interest means that the veteran has the right to reside in the home under tribal laws.

This is good news for our veterans and their spouses. For this reason, I again thank my colleagues for including my provision in this important legislation. I also thank the

VA for its assistance and my good friend Ranking Member Lane Evans of the VA Committee for his tireless efforts and support, the Congressman concluded.

[Press Release, May 22, 2006]

HOUSE AND SENATE PASS VETERANS BILL AND INCLUDES FALEOMAVAEGA'S PROVISION FOR NON-SAMOAN VETERANS MARRIED TO SAMOANS TO QUALIFY FOR VA HOME LOANS

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that by a vote of 372 to 0 the House passed S. 1235, the Veterans Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006 and included his provision for non-Samoan veterans married to Samoans to qualify for VA Home Loans. As we approach Memorial Day to remember and honor our military men and women who have died while serving our nation during a time of war, it is especially fitting that the House and Senate have passed the Veterans Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006 in tribute to those who are still with us, Faleomavaega said.

America is what she is today because of the sacrifices made by our military men and women and their families. This is why I am pleased that the US Congress is recognizing their service by passing S. 1235. After years of hard work, I am also pleased to announce that once the President signs this legislation into law, non-Samoan veterans married to Samoans will finally be able to qualify for VA home loans.

For too long, Native American veterans, including Samoans, were not able to participate in the VA Home Loan program because our land is communally rather than privately held. For the same reason, traditional lending institutions also would not make home loans to Native Americans because in case of default the bank would not be able to repossess the land or the home due to factors associated with communal ownership.

However, in 1992, with the support of the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, were able to establish a pilot program making it possible for Native Americans, including Samoans, to qualify for VA home loans. Even though this was groundbreaking and very helpful to many of our veterans, the program was still problematic because it excluded the spouses of non-native Americans from qualifying for a VA home loan and for us this meant that non-Samoan military spouses married to native Samoans were also unable to qualify.

But thanks to the successful passage of today's legislation, our non-Samoan veterans married to Samoans will now be able to qualify for VA home loans and I couldn't be happier that their dreams of home ownership can now come true. At this time, I especially want to thank Chairman Steve Buyer and Ranking Member Lane Evans of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and also Chairman John Boozman and Ranking Member Stephanie Herseth of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and Mary Ellen McCarthy, Democratic Staff Director for Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, for their support and tireless efforts in making this possible. I also thank Senator Larry Craig and Senator Daniel Akaka, Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, for their leadership.

Finally, I want to thank the VA for assisting the Veterans Affairs Committee and my office in drafting language that has been included in section 104 of S. 1235 which now makes home ownership a reality for non-Samoan veterans married to Samoans. As a result of this language, it is our understanding that a non-Samoan military member or veteran may now qualify for a VA loan if the non-Samoan military member has a meaningful interest in the housing a Samoan